

# LETTERS to the Editor . . .

September 27, 1954

YOUR RECENT EDITORIAL [September 1954] on multiphasic surveys is good, but does not get to one of the roots of the evil. This is the manner in which our profession is exploited by the persons conducting the survey. For example, in the Los Angeles survey to which you refer, the fee paid to physicians for interpreting the chest x-rays was 5 cents per film.

We train a physician in medicine for eight years, then send him through internship and often a three-year residency. After twelve such years of training he attempts to go into practice. He finds various agencies and groups conducting mass surveys, and the fee which he is accorded for rendering a diagnostic conclusion as to the presence or absence of significant shadows in a chest film is 5 cents! It matters not that the film is small; it still takes time, medical judgment and ability to determine the presence or absence of significant shadows.

We do not know what fee is accorded the physicians who read the electrocardiograms; perhaps they get 10 cents per electrocardiogram. And what is paid the physician supervising the vision, blood serum or hemoglobin tests?

In what other field of human endeavor are such small fees accorded to professional persons? This is all very well for the group, but distinctly unreasonable for the physician.

Finally, the advocates of preventive medicine would have mass cytology surveys for cancer of the cervix; mass surveys of the stomach for carcinoma; mass surveys for diabetes and for other non-communicable diseases. As you stated, the actual yield in cases detected by such surveys is extremely small; the number of patients who take the necessary steps to correct the condition (if actually confirmed) is notoriously low.

Meantime, physicians are asked to contribute their services to these programs either gratis or at a wage totally inadequate for the labor performed. The result is indifferent survey work and no true gain in public health.

Yours sincerely,

M. MASTERSON, M.D.

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IN THE AUGUST ISSUE OF CALIFORNIA MEDICINE, final paragraph, first column, page 105, the statement is made that in Riverside County the C.P.S. income ceiling was eliminated, as was done in San Pedro.

This statement is not quite correct: the income ceiling for C.P.S. in Riverside County is still \$4,200. The \$6,000 ceiling has been discussed and is now under consideration, but no change has been made.

Mention of this is made only to make sure our position here is clearly and accurately presented.

Sincerely yours,

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THE EDITORIAL, Volume 81, No. 3, page 240, September 1954, on Multiphasic Surveys: Streamlined Diagnosis for the Public, is one of the best summaries of this so-called Public Health endeavor.

Because of the fair and complete evaluation of this technique or program, we are interested in obtaining additional copies to be used for teaching purposes....

Sincerely,

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